

## BROADCAST 5056

DATE: July 15, 2008

TO: Local Directors, Local Adoption /Foster Care Supervisors/Workers

FROM: Lynette Isbell, Director, Division of Family Services, Therese Wolf, Foster Care Program Manager, Vernon Simmons, Adoption Program Manager

TIME: 12:51 p.m.

SUBJECT: Legislative Mandate for Minimal Training of Foster Care and Adoption Local Agency Staff and Supervisors

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Effective July 1, 2008, Code of Virginia §63.2-913 and §63.2-1220.1 requires the Virginia Department of Social Services(VDSS) to establish minimum training requirements and provide educational programs for foster care and adoption workers and their supervisors, employed by local departments of social services (LDSS). This broadcast provides initial guidance in response to this legislation. More detailed guidance will be forthcoming as additional information is made available

In 2006 as a requirement of the Child and Family Services Review Program Improvement Plan, VDSS developed a list of core courses that all new and ongoing foster care and adoption workers should take. The list has been updated to respond to training needs related to the growing number of older children in foster care who are not achieving permanency.

Effective immediately the courses listed below are required for all LDSS foster care and adoption workers and supervisors hired after July 1, 2008, according to time frames listed. In addition to the courses listed below, all foster care and adoption supervisors hired after July 1, 2008 are required to attend CWS 5701 Supervising Child Welfare Services. This course is to be completed in the first year of employment as a supervisor. As this course is newly developed, a course description similar to those below will be provided in the near future.

The minimal training for new foster care and adoption workers and supervisors during the first six months of employment includes:

### **CWS 3000 Foster Care New Worker Policy Training with OASIS**

Participants will: learn the requirements of the Foster Care program in Virginia; become knowledgeable about the laws, regulations, and policy that guide Foster Care practice at the local level; and, practice documenting the policy requirements in OASIS. Topics Include: Purpose and guiding principles of Foster Care services; Legal requirements for Foster Care, Foster Care

prevention, and family preservation; How children enter care, safeguards, and placement authorities and options; Requirements for opening a case and completing all required referrals; Assessment and service planning, and choosing the Permanency Goal; Reassessments, reviews, and redeterminations; Policy and practice related to closing the case; Funding maintenance and service provision; How to document all policy requirements in OASIS.

### **CWS 3010 Adoption New Worker Policy Training with OASIS**

Participants will learn the policy requirements of the agency placement Adoption program in Virginia; become knowledgeable about the laws, regulations, and policy that guide Adoption practice at the local level; and, practice documenting the policy requirements in OASIS. Topics Include: Purpose and guiding principles of providing agency placement Adoptions in Virginia; Provisions of pre- and post-placement, and post-Adoption services; How to register and update information in the Adoption Resource Exchange of Virginia (AREVA); Policies and funding sources related to provision of Adoption subsidies; Best practice, as well as policy requirements, for conducting adoptive home studies; How to respond to appeals regarding the adoptive home approval process; How to document all policy requirements in OASIS. This course includes a review of non-agency placement policy as well as other court mandated services.

### **CWS 1031 Separation and Loss in Human Services Practice**

Participants will understand the dynamics of separation and loss in children and families. Examine the stages of grief and the effects of stress and trauma on children, birth parents, and foster parents. Topics Include: Parent/child attachment and foundations of a healthy relationship; Feelings commonly associated with separation; Stages of grief - how it manifests in children and impacts birth parents' actions; Impact of loss on children and families in placements; Post-traumatic stress disorder and its impact; Crisis intervention theory; Strategies to minimize impact of trauma on children and families.

### **CWS 3041 Working with Children in Placement**

Participants will learn practical skills and techniques for working with children in placement. Experience an interactive and resource-filled curriculum that includes videos, children's books, storytelling, and life books. Topics Include: Assessing children's needs; Preparing children for placement; Talking about the past; Coping with emotions and grief; Managing behavior and preventing disruptions; Developing a planned and purposeful visitation plan; and, Conducting placement family meetings.

### **CWS 3031 Assessment and Service Planning**

Participants will learn to assess the needs of children and families. Establish goals and service plans that address needs and promote safety and permanency. Topics Include: Impact of maltreatment on development, attachment, and placement needs; At-risk families, including the risk of further abuse/neglect; Goals and service plans that address reasons for removal and family needs; Reasonable efforts and criteria for changing goals; Issues relating to placement with relatives; Post-placement services.

The minimal training for foster care and adoption workers who have been employed seven to 12 months includes:

**CWS 3061 Permanency Planning with Older Teens: Making Life Long Connections**

Participants will learn how to help teens identify and establish emotional connections and build the family support necessary for navigating the difficult transition into adulthood. Topics Include: Developmental issues and the need for permanency for teens; Impact of the Child Welfare system and barriers to permanency; The concept of resiliency and resiliency led practice to assist youth in care as well as the key elements of loyalty, loss, self-esteem, behavior management, and self-determination as the foundation of permanency; Ways to involve teens in identifying their own permanency resources and the role of youth-specific recruitment in making permanent connections. Strategies for preparing teens for family living and supporting permanency are discussed.

**CWS 5305 Engaging Families**

It is strongly recommended that supervisors attend prior to social work staff. This course will assist workers to engage families in a mutually beneficial partnership and assess a family's readiness for change. Workers will learn two client engagement models and the recommended strategies for sustaining motivation and commitment to change. Topics Include: Engagement and the Strengths Perspective the Stages of Change Motivational Interviewing Techniques Solution-Focused Interviewing Techniques

**CWS 3081 Promoting Family Reunification**

For children in foster care, reunification with birth parents or prior custodians is often the primary permanency goal and the most likely reason a child will leave placement. This course will examine the planned process of reconnecting children in out-of-home care with their families or prior custodians by means of a variety of services and supports to the children, their families, their foster families, and other service providers. Topics Include: Family-focused practice; Principles of reunification; Separation and loss; Maintaining connectedness; Planned visitation; Partnership and collaboration; Role of foster parents, birth parents, or prior custodians in the casework process, service delivery, and case planning.